

Message Text

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SUBJECT: FDP LAND CONVENTION

1. SUMMARY: AT A SPECIAL CONVENTION IN KARLSRUHE-NEUREUT ON APRIL 22, THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SECTION OF THE FDP ELECTED A NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, WITH DR. JUERGEN MORLOK SUCCEEDING DR. MARTIN BANGEMANN AS LAND CHAIRMAN. THE PARTY HOPES THAT MORLOK WILL BE ABLE TO REVITALIZE THE FDP IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG BY RECONCILING THE VARIOUS WINGS OF THE PARTY AND MAKING IT MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE VOTERS BEFORE LANDTAG ELECTIONS IN THE SPRING OF 1980. END SUMMARY.

2. NORMALLY THE BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG SECTION OF THE FDP WOULD HAVE ELECTED ITS NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AT THE CONVENTION NOW SCHEDULED FOR NEXT JANUARY. HOWEVER, THE POOR STATE OF MORALE WITHIN THE PARTY, THE DECLINE IN MEMBERSHIP (DOWN 3.9 PERCENT IN 1977), THE CONSTANT ABSENCE OF OUTGOING CHAIRMAN DR. MARTIN
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BANGEMANN, AND THE NEED TO PREPARE FOR COMMUNAL ELECTIONS IN 1979 AND LANDTAG ELECTIONS IN THE SPRING OF 1980 WERE ALL FACTORS THAT POINTED TO THE URGENCY FOR AN EARLIER SOLUTION TO THE QUESTION OF PARTY LEADERSHIP AT THE LAND LEVEL.

3. MORLOK'S ALMOST UNANIMOUS ELECTION AS NEW LAND CHAIRMAN CAME AS NO SURPRISE. FOR TWO YEARS, HE HAS BEEN FDP FACTION

LEADER IN THE LANDTAG AND THE PARTY HAS BEEN QUITE SATISFIED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF ITS SMALL NINE MEMBER FACTION. MORLOK IS THOUGHT TO HAVE GOOD CHANCE OF SMOOTHING OVER DIFFERENCES AND RECONCILING VARIOUS ELEMENTS WITH THE PARTY BEFORE IT HAS TO FACE THE LANDTAG ELECTION CAMPAIGN, AS WELL AS HELPING THE FDP TO COME UP WITH A CLEARLY FORMULATED POLITICAL PLATFORM WITH WHICH PARTY MEMBERS AND THE VOTERS CAN IDENTIFY.

4. INRICH ENDERLEIN, GEORG GALLUS AND KLAUS ROESCH WERE REELECTED DEPUTY CHAIRMEN - THE LATTER A CLOSE BANGEMANN FOLLOWER AND REELECTED ONLY ON THE SECOND BALLOT AND AFTER A HEATED DEBATE - BUT THE REST OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE UNDERWENT SOME CHANGES. CERTAIN MEMBERS, IDENTIFIED WITH THE LEFT WING OF THE PARTY, HAD NOT EVEN BEEN NOMINATED FOR RE-ELECTION BY THEIR LOCAL CHAPTERS. THEY WERE REPLACED ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE BY NEW MEMBERS FROM THE CENTER OR GITH WING OF THE FDP.

5. THE FDP HAS BEEN IN THE OPPOSITION IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG FOR 12 YEARS, AND OVER THAT PERIOD ITS STRENGTH HAS CONSTANTLY DECLINED. FROM 14.4 PERCENT OF THE VOTES IN THE 1968 LANDTAG ELECTIONS, IT POLLED ONLY 8.9 PERCENT IN 1972 AND 7.8 PERCENT IN 1976. THE NEW COMPOSITION OF THE LAND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REFLECTS THE JUDGMENT THAT IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG THE FDP CAN ONLY WIN BACK VOTERS WHICH IT LOST TO THE CDU MAJORITY BY MOVING THE PARTY BACK TO THE CENTER OF THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM. MORLOK ANNOUNCED THAT FIRST STEPS SHOULD BE STRENGTHENING OF FDP
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CHAPTERS AT THE GRASS ROOTS LEVEL AND BETTER FORMULATION OF MEANINGFUL LIBERAL ALTERNATIVES TO POLICIES OF THE PRESENT LAND GOVERNMENT. IN STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS HE DID NOT COMMIT HIMSELF ON WHETHER THE FDP WOULD CONTEMPLATE JOINING A CDU COALITION IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG IN 1980. ONLY AT THE END OF NEXT YEAR, HE SAID, WILL THE FDP KNOW " WITH WHICH PARTY LIBERAL POLICIES CAN BEST BE CARRIED OUT."

6. COMMENT: NOT WELL KNOWN ON THE NATIONAL SCENE, MORLOK MAY BE AN UP-AND-COMER IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG POLITICS. YOUNG, (32), DYNAMIC (AND, INCIDENTALLY, ONE OF THE POST'S PROPOSED NOMINEES FOR A LEADER GRANT THIS YEAR), MORLOK MAY BE JUST WHAT THE FDP NEEDS IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG TO SHAKE THE PARTY OUT OF ITS LETHARGY AND TO GIVE IT AND ITS PROGRAMS A MORE ATTRACTIVE, WINNING IMAGE. SINCE MORLOK'S POLITICAL ACTIVITY IS LIMITED TO THE LAND SCENE, HE WILL CERTAINLY BE ABLE TO DEVOTE MORE TIME TO THE FDP'S LOCAL FORTUNES AND TO PROVIDE MUCH MORE ACTIVE LEADERSHIP THAN WAS THE CASE WITH BANGEMANN. SUCCESS OR FAILURE IN HIS NEW ROLE WILL BE A DETERMINING FACTOR IN WHETHER MORLOK DOES RISE TO NATIONAL PROMINENCE. IN THE MEANTIME, HE HAS HIS WORK CUT OUT FOR HIM IN TRYING TO GIVE THE FDP GREATER STRENGTH AND CLOUT IN BADEN-WUERTTEMBERG WHERE THE PARTY'S ROLE AND IMPORTANCE HAVE SUNKEN TO A VERY LOW LEVEL. MILLER

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